
Health Care Committee

2SSB 6193

Brief Description: Requiring surveys of health professions work force supply and demographics.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Franklin, Regala, Keiser, Eide, Prentice, Rasmussen, Jacobsen, Fairley, McAuliffe, Fraser, Brown, Kline, Kohl-Welles, Parlette and Shin).

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Second Substitute Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requires the Department of Health to send surveys to health care providers to gather data about the health care work force.

Hearing Date: 2/21/06

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

The Department of Health (Department) regulates 57 health care professions. Currently, over 290,000 people hold a health care provider credential issued by the Department. Of those, approximately 170,000 are licensed health care providers.

The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Board) convened a task force to examine the extent to which there is a shortage of trained health care providers in Washington and to develop recommendations for increasing the number of providers. In its 2002 report, the task force noted that there were shortages of health care professionals in several professions including dental hygienists, dentists, medical aides, nurses, pharmacists, physicians, and radiology technologists. One of the recommendations of the task force was to "develop a data collection and analysis system to assess health workforce supply and demand."

In 2004, the Legislature created the Joint Select Committee on Health Disparities (Committee) through the adoption of Senate Concurrent Resolution 8419. The Committee issued a report on health disparities in Washington on November 1, 2005. The report contained several recommendations and findings for the Legislature's consideration. Among the Committee's recommendations was to identify and collect "relevant and accurate data on health care professionals" as one way to reduce health disparities.

Summary of Bill:

The Department shall gather data related to the supply of health care providers and demographics of the health care work force through surveys that will be sent periodically to licensed health care providers. In developing the surveys, the Department shall collaborate with the Board.

At a minimum, the surveys must include questions related to:

- specialty;
- age;
- race or ethnicity;
- hours in practice per week;
- practice statistics;
- zip code of the provider's practice;
- years and locations where the provider has practiced;
- education and training and where the education and training was received; and
- types of facilities where the provider practices.

The Department may approve proposals to distribute surveys requesting additional data to individual professions if: (1) there is a legitimate research interest; (2) the burden on license holders is not unreasonable; (3) the effect on survey response rates is not unreasonable; and (4) funds are available. The Department may accept funds from other entities to support the enhanced surveys.

Data elements from the surveys are confidential and exempt from public disclosure, unless they are released for study and analysis pursuant to a data sharing agreement. The Department shall make a public data set available that maintains the confidentiality of individual health care providers.

The failure to complete a survey may not be grounds for disciplinary action against a health care provider.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 14, 2006.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.